

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of the claims:

Claims 12-24 (cancelled)

Claim 25 (currently amended): Method of dewatering sludge, comprising

addition of a basic agent to sludge having a pH equal to or less than 8,

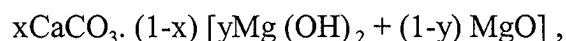
addition to the sludge of at least one flocculating organic component,

by the addition of the above mentioned basic agent, an increase in pH of the sludge to a value less than a pH as from which degradation of the said at least one organic component takes place,

flocculation of the sludge, and

separation of the flocculated sludge between dewatered sludge and a liquid phase,

~~characterized in that~~ wherein the above mentioned basic agent is a calcaro-magnesian compound complying with the formula



in which

x and y are molar fractions

$0.45 \leq x \leq 0.75$, and

$0 \leq y \leq 1$,

and in that the treated said sludge has, until after the said separation, the said value lower than a pH as from which degradation of the said at least one flocculating organic component takes place.

Claim 26 (currently amended): Method according to claim 25 characterized in that wherein the calcaro-magnesian compound is a half-burnt dolomite, comprising ~~an~~ a MgO component, possibly partially or totally in the form of $Mg(OH)_2$.

Claim 27 (currently amended): Method according to claim 25, characterized in that it comprises the comprising said increase in pH to a value of no more than 10.

Claim 28 (currently amended): Method according to claim 25, characterized in that wherein the addition of the calcaro-magnesian compound takes place prior to, simultaneously with and/or after the addition of the said at least one flocculating organic compound.

Claim 29 (currently amended): Method according to claim 28, characterized in that wherein the addition of the calcaro-magnesian compound takes place before the above mentioned separation step.

Claim 30 (currently amended): Method according to claim 25, characterized in that it comprises, comprising, after the said separation, an incineration of the dewatered sludge.

Claim 31 (currently amended): Method according to claim 25, characterized in that, in the case of acid sludge, it also comprises wherein the sludge to dewater is acid and the method comprises also a prior neutralization of this acid sludge so that it has a pH of at least 6.

Claim 32 (currently amended): Method according to claim 26, characterized in that it wherein the half-burnt dolomite issues from a burning of double calcium and magnesium carbonate under conditions such that it has a CaO content of less than 5% by weight and an MgCO₃ content of less than 10% by weight.

Claim 33 (canceled)

Claim 34 (new): Method according to claim 25, wherein the calcaro-magnesian compound is a half-burnt dolomite, comprising a MgO component partially in the form of Mg(OH)₂.

Claim 35 (new): Method according to claim 25, wherein the calcaro-magnesian compound is a half-burnt dolomite, comprising a MgO compound totally in the form of Mg(OH)₂.

Claim 36 (new): Method of dewatering sludge, comprising

addition of a basic agent to sludge having a pH equal to or less than 8,

addition to the sludge of at least one flocculating cationic organic component,

by the addition of the above mentioned basic agent, an increase in pH of the sludge to a value less than a pH as from which degradation of said at least one flocculating cationic organic component takes place,

flocculation of the sludge, and

separation of the flocculated sludge between dewatered sludge and a liquid phase,

wherein the above mentioned basic agent is a calcaro-magnesian compound complying with the formula

$x\text{CaCO}_3, (1-x) [\text{yMg(OH)}_2 + (1-\text{y}) \text{MgO}],$

in which

x and y are molar fractions

$0.45 \leq x \leq 0.75$, and

$0 \leq y \leq 1$,

and in that said sludge has, until after the said separation, said value lower than a pH as from which degradation of said at least one flocculating cationic organic component takes place.

Claim 37 (new): Method according to claim 36, wherein the calcaro-magnesian compound is a half-burnt dolomite, comprising a MgO component.

Claim 38 (new) Method according to claim 36, comprising said increase in pH to a value of no more than 10.

Claim 39 (new): Method according to claim 36, wherein the addition of the calcaro-magnesian compound takes place prior to, simultaneously with and/or after the addition of said at least one flocculating cationic organic compound.

Claim 40 (new): Method according to claim 39, wherein the addition of the calcaro-magnesian compound takes place before the above mentioned separation step.

Claim 41 (new): Method according to claim 36, comprising, after said separation, an incineration of the dewatered sludge.

Claim 42 (new): Method according to claim 36, wherein the sludge to dewater is acid and the method comprises also a prior neutralization of this acid sludge so that it has a pH of at least 6.

Claim 43 (new): Method according to claim 36, wherein the half-burnt dolomite issues from a burning of double calcium and magnesium carbonate under conditions such that it has a CaO content of less than 5% by weight and an MgCO₃ content of less than 10% by weight.

Claim 44 (new): Method according to claim 36, wherein the calcaro-magnesian compound is a half-burnt dolomite, comprising a MgO component partially in the form of Mg(OH)₂.

Claim 45 (new): Method according to claim 36, wherein the calcaro-magnesian compound is a half-burnt dolomite, comprising a MgO compound totally in the form of Mg(OH)₂.